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Burrthi Aboriginal Corporation

PO Box 98
Parap NT 0804
Australia

Tel: 08 8942 2101

Email: Burrthi@iinet.net.au

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BY: ADIA

Ms Pauline Brown
Secretary
House of Reps Standing Committee on ATSI Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

25th July 2008

Dear Ms Brown

Re: Inquiry into developing Indigenous enterprises

I would like to submit to the Committee on its current Inquiry looking at:

"Whether current government, industry and community programs offering specific enterprise support programs and services to Indigenous enterprises are effective, particularly in building sustainable relationships with the broader business sector;.."

For the past 14 months my corporation has been working to try and establish a funding base to examine the opportunity for six enterprises which we believe could have a significant impact on employment opportunities and life style choices for our people. These are:

1. **Shopping precinct** at Galiwin'ku on Elcho Island
2. **Fishing industry** centered on Trepang (possibly in conjunction with permit holders Tasmanian Seafoods).
3. **Transport service** by land and sea between the communities of Milingimbi, Galiwin'ku, Ramingining and Gapyuwiak and the regional centres of Nhulunbuy, Katherine and Darwin.
4. **Homelands expansion** - allow Dhurrili Djambarrpuyngu people to move back to homeland country at Djurranalpi and Banlutha through the purchase and erection of low cost accommodation through housing development and other services.
5. **Tourism centre** - based around the Djurranalpi and Banlutha regions of Elcho Island.
6. **Daruma Village** - in Galiwin'ku for Burrthi members to locate to providing sporting and social amenities as well as housing with strict lease arrangements for the houses from the Burrthi Corporation.

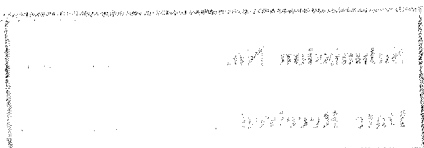
To this date, and after 14 months of trying, we have received just \$11,500 to help with a training program that cost \$30,000. The assistance given to Burrthi has been virtually nothing. We have funded what we have done from our own Centrelink payments that have been halved by government as a result of the NT Emergency Response.

My comments to you are in respect to the journey we have had in trying to get government departments interested in our work and assisting us with funding to allow a proper basis of moving ahead in the commercial world. I am sorry to have to say this has been a very hard road and provides an answer as to why there has not been any significant development of employment opportunities in remote communities in the past.

My people were brought up in a different world. We are traditional Aboriginal people who were born in the bush and raised by the mission people. We were paid in food, clothing and a roof over our heads.

Today's commercial world requires a different degree of understanding and we need help to be able to embrace it and show our younger people why they should be doing the same.

There a number of observations I have made over the past year and among them are:

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1. Children will not go to school until they can see reasons why an education is needed to live successfully in the two worlds from which they have a choice – the developed world or the traditional Aboriginal life.
 2. The creation of jobs must be through real job enterprises that give people a benefit they want in exchange for money.
 3. Money must be recognised as a reward for something done – not just coming out of the sky for handing in a form.
 4. The fact that money is exchanged in the providing of goods and services is recognition of the value of the product bought. Money is not a right but a reward and means of exchange.
 5. Business enterprises must be seen as a way of providing a meaning for life – a meaning to get up in the morning – a reason to want to learn – and an example to set the children.
 6. Efficient businesses grow out of competition – two food outlets will provide better choices than one and the same applies to any store that is subject to competition.
 7. Aboriginal people must look at who is making money out of them and turn this around so they are making money out of themselves. This is the only way to get rid of the welfare dependant mentality.
 8. Good health is a reward for good living – an unhealthy life is the result of unhealthy living and this is caused by boredom, lack of dreams, no incentive to get up in the morning and a sleepy lifestyle.

If government wants Aboriginal people to take charge of their lives they must provide the correct tools to make this happen. At present there is no evidence of anything being done to help identify what those tools have to be. Beyond anything else we need:

1. **Professional advice** in developing the enterprise – tax, accounting, legal, corporate image, website and descriptive material for stakeholders.
2. **Skills audit** of the target population to ascertain previous training, education, skills transfer and aspirations for a working future
3. **Training in business development** to bridge the gap for people raised in a traditional Aboriginal culture and now moving into the First World commercial reality.

These three areas are vital to running an efficient business in the commercial world. We do not want to be patronized any more but treated as human beings with an equal right to the opportunities that a developed world offers. The fact we are from a different world view means that there needs to be programs that help bridge the giant chasm that is between our two worlds. You must understand the world we are coming from in the same way as we want to understand yours.

Aboriginal enterprises are at the heart of a renewal of partnerships between us and non-Aboriginal Australians. We must work together to resolve the gap and good health and longer life will only come when healthy decisions can be made about how we live. We do not need more doctors and nurses to be healthier – we need opportunities and enterprises that give a new hope and enjoyment to the world of work.

The first role models our children should look up to are the parents, aunts and uncles and leaders in their own community. Such people have to be found for the next generation of children to prosper.

I could go on but will ask if I may expand on these views at your public hearing to be held in Darwin on 6th to 8th August 2008. I will be pleased to answer questions for I believe that after 30 years of fighting for my people I can help you find a new direction.

Yours sincerely



KEITH DJINIYINI
Chairman